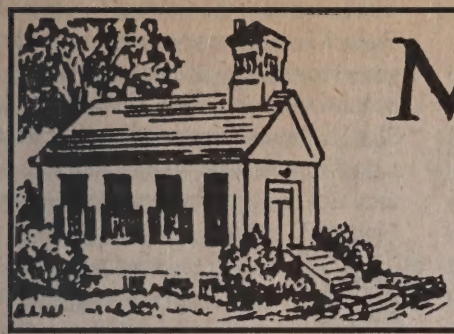

# MONTEREY NEWS

FEBRUARY 1994

## THE TOWN

Monterey voters adopted a new bylaw allowing a real estate tax exemption of up to $1500 for Monterey firefighters at a Special Town Meeting on Friday, January 21, 1994. A home rule petition to the state legislature (required for such an exemption from the state tax code) was approved by the town four years ago, and when that petition finally won legislative approval, the town drafted the bylaw which has now been adopted. The bylaw rewards qualified Monterey firefighters for all the time and energy they give to protect the town and its residents. It requires firefighters to be members of the Monterey Fire Company, Ltd. for at least one year, certified in CPR, First Responder first aid, and Haz-Mat. Other requirements include attendance at 75% of training sessions, and response to at least 75% of all alarms. At this time, twelve members of the fifteen member Fire Company qualify for the exemption.

In other business conducted at the Special Town Meeting, an expenditure of $25,000 for emergency repairs to the town offices was approved. Initially the money was intended to bring the furnace into compliance with the state building code, and improve the bathroom to meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. However, on the day of the Special Town Meeting the pipes in the town offices froze and burst due to a faulty water heater, so some of the money will go toward those repairs.

Monterey voters also approved $3,000 for computer software, $2,000 toward a computer maintenance agreement, and a 2.5% pay raise for Town Secretary Maryellen Brown, since a job review demonstrated that her duties have increased.

The Selectmen received a letter from the Superintendent of the Farmington River Regional School District expressing concern about the condition of Monterey roads. The school district has one bus that takes children from Otis and Sandisfield to Searles Middle School and Monument Mountain High School. The letter claims that the roads are not sanded or salted, and that even Route 23 is often not plowed. The Selectmen have not yet officially responded to the complaint, but during their regular meeting they allowed that it's been a rough winter for weather and the Highway Department has worked a lot of overtime trying to keep the roads clear. Selectmen Stefan Grotz and Peter Brown will draft a response to the Superintendent.

Chair of the Board of Selectmen Georgiana O'Connell signed an agreement between the towns of Sheffield, Great Barrington, Monterey, New Marlborough, and Sandisfield to create a Southern Berkshire Emergency Management Department, and to work together developing and implementing a hazard mitigation plan. The plan is intended to reduce loss of property and risk to human life by planning ways to deal with natural hazards and disasters. Monterey will be represented in the Department by Emergency Management Director Raymond W. Tryon. Issues to be addressed by the Emergency Management Department include identification of natural hazards; identification of areas most susceptible to damage from natural hazards; ways to improve warning and response procedures; improving maintenance of roads, bridges, and culverts; the development of coordinated standard operating procedures for response and recovery actions; the development of training programs, public awareness programs, and an implementation program.

The Selectmen met with Fire Chief Ray Tryon, Police Chief Gareth Backhaus, and Jim McGarry, Chief of Police and Emergency Management Director for the town of Sheffield, to discuss a proposed South County Dispatch Center. Chief McGarry submitted for review a copy of the *Study for Proposed Emergency Dispatch Center for Southern Berkshire Towns*. McGarry described three different ways of creating a Regional Communication Center to receive E-911 calls and dispatch emergency services: 1) Great Barrington

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operates the Center and charges participating communities a fee for services; 2) Great Barrington police officers operate and staff the Center; 3) trained civilian telecommunication personnel hired by the regional committee operate and staff the Center. The Committee concluded that the creation of a Southern Berkshire Regional Communication Center staffed by trained civilian dispatchers (number three above) would provide the most effective emergency response service. The Selectmen, Chief Backhaus, Chief Tryon, and E-911 coordinator Maynard Forbes will continue to discuss the issue until a decision is reached.

Joyce Scheffey, a member of the Solid Waste Committee, and an alternate delegate to the Southern Berkshire Solid Waste Management District, presented the Selectmen with a copy of the *Western Massachusetts Solid Waste Management Guide*, produced by the Solid Waste Education and Enterprise Program (SWEEP). The guide includes a directory of recycling services as well as regional manufacturers and distributors of recycled products. (See related story on p. 5.)

The Board of Selectmen met with Arts Council members John Humphrey and Lisa Simpson. It was noted that the Arts Council will be renamed the Cultural Council. The Council is seeking new members, and suggested several candidates to the Board. By unanimous vote, John Humphrey, Julie Shapiro, Jason Brown, Clifford Aerie, and Lisa Simpson were appointed to the Cultural Council for a two year term expiring January 3, 1996.

— Maggie Leonard

## LAKE GARFIELD ASSOCIATION APPLIES FOR GRANT

In November the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management announced plans to award small grants for the protection, preservation, and enhancement of lakes and ponds in the Commonwealth. Although applications for these grants were due by December 31, and the holidays were already upon us, we met the deadline. We felt we should take advantage of the state's willingness to match funds (50/50) with us on a limited scale, since this is the first year for such grants, and the program is viewed as a pilot for helping local organizations meet the challenges of lake and pond management. There is $100,000 available, and single grants are limited to $10,000.

We decided to build on previous Lake Garfield Association efforts at lake management. Using the two studies of 1989 and 1992 that identified "problem areas" along the lake shore, we would like to narrow the investigation and identify the source(s) of problems in these areas, which might be septic system leachate, other nutrient leachates, or surface run-off.

Our proposal is for a septic system survey of the lake. This study would include the following:

•Seepage quantity measurements, which involve deploying seepage meters to estimate the volume of seepage water entering or leaving the lake.

•Seepage quality sampling, which would include the collection of LIP (littoral interstitial porewater) samples from the designated shoreline segments. These will show the quantity and quality of ground water seeping into the lake, with analysis of pH and conductivity in the field.

•Implementation of a quality assurance/quality control program that would incorporate triplicate seepage meter measurements.

•A final report which would describe and discuss methods and results, and evaluate data with respect to potential contamination of Lake Garfield by septic leachate. The QA/QC program and its results would be included, as well as maps of the estimated zone of ground water contribution, with dwellings associated with each shoreline segment, and their relationship to seepage and water quality results. An estimate of phosphorus and nitrogen loading from each shoreline segment would be calculated from the collected data. Any areas of concern would be described, and recommendations for further investigation or remedial action would be formulated.

Septic systems have long been seen as a threat to lake water quality, but the relationship is not simple. Localized soil conditions, seasonal changes in water tables, and variable use of septic systems confound generalizations about septic system impacts. If the systems are impacting the lake, we want to take action. We do not, however, wish to act rashly or without sound scientific justification. Results of such analysis have varied from lake to lake, leading to corrective action in some cases, and discovery of unexpected pollutant sources in others.

The total cost of this study would be $5900. In an even split with the Commonwealth, the Lake Garfield Association would pay $2950.

It is a pleasure to go to the state for help in building on information gained from previous studies in which the town had been our major financial partner.

— Muriel Lazzarini

## PARK COMMISSION

The Monterey Park Commission would like to thank all who helped the "new" skating rink become a reality. Special gratitude to Wayne Dunlop, whose many volunteer hours have been vital to the success of the project. Wayne's efforts bring to this writer's mind the old expression "Well begun is half done." While there is still more work to do, the rink is already quite serviceable. A schedule for use of the rink appeared in last month's *News*, to which we add these modifications for Sundays:

Open skate will start at noon. Hockey sticks will be allowed 3–5 p.m.

The Commission urges skaters to wear a hat (required at most area rinks) for minimum safety while on the ice.

On a subject relevant to another season, the Playground Committee, (Sarah Bingham, Carol Edelman, Julie Shapiro, and Alan Dean) made a presentation at our meeting on January 6. Feasability of location, construction materials, and surface mounting of equipment have been the focus of their inquiries. Layout designs from two manufacturers favored by the Committee should arrive before the next Park Commission meeting on February 3. The Commission endorses their efforts for an upgraded playground, and encourages input from townspeople.

— Mick Burns

## CORRECTION

A contribution to the skating rink recorded in the December issue of the *News* as the gift of Barry Jaffe was in fact the gift of Marjorie and Barry Jaffe.

## LAND TRUST NEWS

The Monterey Land Trust is the grateful recipient of fifty acres on the Sandisfield Road donated by the Struan Farms Trust. The property is to be called "The John Reid Woods" and has been given to the Trust without restrictions. We offer our thanks to the Reid family for their farsighted gift and their generosity.

A newsletter will go out to our membership in March or earlier, and will include a proxy form to be signed and returned for the election of officers, as well as membership renewal cards for 1994. We will also set a date for the annual meeting at that time. Please keep your eyes peeled for this exciting data.

— Joyce Scheffey

## DEMOCRATS SET CAUCUS, SEEK CANDIDATES

The Nominating Committee of the Democratic Party is currently seeking Monterey residents who would like to run for office, or would consider serving the town in some other way. Please contact any member of the Committee: Bob Gauthier, Mel Dyer-Bennet, Gige O'Connell, Gerry Shapiro, Cynthia Weber.

The Democratic Party Caucus will be held on Saturday, February 12 at 2 p.m. in the Monterey Firehouse on Main Road. All registered Monterey Democrats are urged to attend. The caucus will select two delegates and two alternates to attend the State Democratic Party Nominating Convention in Worcester on June 4 and 5.

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## CHILDREN'S HEALTH PROGRAM

Think Spring! Buy a little green plant and put it in a place of honor. Our playgroup schedule is included in this issue of the *News*. Try to attend whenever the weather permits.

We plan three special activities during February. Baby's first Valentine party on February 8, 1–3 p.m. Parents, infants, and siblings are invited to attend the playgroup at Simon's Rock College Gym. During inclement weather, use the entrance from Lake Mansfield Road. Valentine party at Otis playgroup, 10–11:30 a.m. on February 14. Winter picnic during school vacation, February 23, Beartown State Park, Monterey—skating, sledding, bring food to cook over grill. The Forest Ranger will tell us about winter life at the park. 11 a.m.–1 p.m.

This is a good time of year to make use of our video lending library. We have over seventy videos on topics related to families, and they can be borrowed free of charge. Playgroups have the list. We have just added two new ones—*Butt Out! Smoking Cessation Plan* and *Coping with Allergies.* We are going to rent our *Active Parenting* video with a handbook and activity book, if you wish to do a parenting course on your own or with friends. The $10 rental covers the cost of the books.

We remind you that a carseat rental program is available at CHP and Fairview Hospital in conjunction with the American Red Cross. Infant seats can be rented through the hospital. Toddler and booster seats are available at CHP. The cost is a $10 deposit, refunded when the seat is returned in good condition, and $5 for four months' rental.

Parent to Parent volunteer training will be held at the Congregational Church in Lee for five Wednesdays in March, beginning March 2, 10 a.m.–12 noon. Volunteers are matched with families in which the mother is pregnant, or has a child two years old or younger. Volunteers are trained to be supportive, give information about services and child development. Volunteers can help transport people to important appointments or playgroups. Parent to Parent also helps women study and obtain their GED qualification and their drivers' licenses. For more information, please call me at 528-9311.

— Claudette Callahan

Parent-Child Playgroup Schedule
1994

| Town | Weekday | Time | Place | Leaders |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ashley Falls | Thursday | 9:30-11:30am | Grace Bible Church | Liz Merola |
| Egremont | Cancelled until September 1994. | | | |
| Great Barr. | Tuesday | 1-3pm | Simons Rock Gym | Karen Kuhn |
| Great Barr. | Thursday | 9:30-11:30am | Simons Rock Gym | Jane Whittaker |
| Housatonic | Monday | 9:30-11:30am | Calvary Christ. Chapel | Miriam Cervera |
| Lee | Tuesday | 10-12noon | Congregational Church | Jo Delisle |
| Lenox | Wednesday | 9:30-11:30am | Lenox Child. Center | Penny Racicot |
| New Marlb. | Tuesday | 9:30-11:30am | Town Hall | Nanci Worthington<br>Debbie O'Brien |
| Otis | Monday | 9:30-11:30am | Town Hall | Lynda Tribula |
| Sandisfield | Mondays (January & February) Fridays resume March 11 | 10-12noon | Community Ctr. | Stacey Fields |
| Sheffield | Wednes. | 9:30-11:30am | Old Parish Church | Michele Palmer |
| Stockbridge | Tuesday | 9:30-11:30am | Youth Bldg. | Dawn Farley<br>Laurie Flower |
| W. Stock. | Tuesday | 9:30-11:30am | Congregational Church | Miriam Cervera |

The Children's Health Program Parent-Child Playgroup Program is sponsored in part by Berkshire County United Way and several smaller donations.

The Lee Playgroup is co-sponsored by the Congregational Church of Lee and the Children's Health Program.

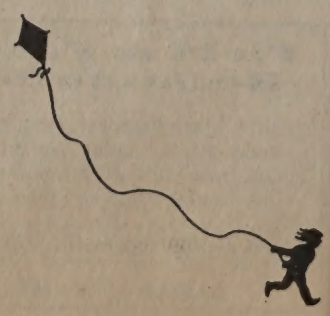
## SOUTHERN BERKSHIRE YOUTH ASSOCIATION

The Southern Berkshire Youth Association has a full schedule planned for this month. There will be a roller skating party on Sunday, February 13, 1–3 p.m. at Undermountain School, Berkshire School Road in Sheffield. All ages are welcome, but roller blades are not. There's a $4 fee. Sharpen your ice skates for a Presidents Day skating party at the Monterey Town Rink (behind the Firehouse, Route 23) on Monday, February 21, 12 noon–3 p.m. Once again, all ages welcome.

The last full week of February (Tuesday 22–Friday 25) the SBYA will hold another winter vacation camp, following on the success of December's camp. The day runs 9:30 a.m.–3:30 p.m. (extended day available), and costs $12/day, or $40 for the full week (four days). The camp features indoor and outdoor activities, arts and crafts, sports and games led by trained counselors.

Saturday, February 19 is the deadline for submissions to the Children's Art Show sponsored by SBYA and Frames on Wheels in Great Barrington. The first sixty artists of kindergarten age through eighth grade to deliver works on paper (maximum size 14" x 18" unframed, 16" x 20" framed) along with a $10 entry fee will be included in a two week show at Frames on Wheels starting February 27. Unframed work will be matted and framed, and the frame will become property of the artist. Artists' reception to open the show, Sunday, February 27 at 1 p.m.

Call 528-6080 for more information.



## SOLID WASTE COMMITTEE

Take a look! Everything you might want to know about our regional and local recycling programs has been put into a book available at the town offices.

The Southern Berkshire Solid Waste Management District (of which Monterey is a member) along with the other Western Regional Districts was the recipient of a grant from the United States Rural Development Administration. The grant is called SWEEP (Solid Waste Education and Enterprise program).

SWEEP helped provide funds for a district wide study just completed by the Center for Rural Massachusetts. Each member town in the district received a book with information relating to the whole district as well as a profile of each town's specific guidelines. In Monterey's profile you will find complete information on our transfer station, such as what we accept for recycling, which haulers we use, where our stuff goes, when white goods (fridges, washer/dryers, etc.) can be disposed of, and more.

The general information includes a regional (fifty mile radius) list of manufacturers and distributors of recycled products, and a list of services and markets for recyclable materials. These lists are extensive, which is encouraging.

The town was presented with its copy of the study at the Selectmen's meeting on January 24, and is available at the town offices for perusal. An additional copy will soon be placed at the Monterey Library. It's an excellent resource, and well worth looking at. We hope you will do so.

At the last meeting of the Monterey Solid Waste Committee, we decided to reduce the yearly transfer station sticker fee for "large" businesses from $300 to $100, since Monterey doesn't have any large businesses. To offset this loss of revenue, it was suggested we reinstate the $60 fee for "small" businesses. We hope users who generate a lot of recyclable paper (such as financial and real estate, or doctors' and lawyers' offices) will voluntarily pay this fee. Hauling the paper container to MRF is 80% of our yearly trucking cost. If you feel your business is a significant user and recycler of paper, we ask that you please consider this proposal.

— Joyce Scheffey

## LIBRARY FILMS ANNOUNCED

On Saturday, February 5, the movie to be shown in the Monterey Library basement is *Star Trek* (1966), starring Jeffrey Hunter and Susan Oliver. It is the pilot for the TV series, in which Spock faces a possible court martial.

The film on February 12 will be *Tarzan The Ape Man* (1932), starring Johnny Weissmuller and Maureen O'Sullivan. Hear the original "Me Tarzan, you Jane."

All films begin at 7:30 p.m. in the Monterey Library basement, Route 23, Monterey. Admission is free; popcorn and apple juice will be available at a nominal cost. For further information, please call the library at 528-3795.

— Eileen Clawson

*Ranger at home in the snow.*

P. MURKETT

## SANDISFIELD CABIN FEVER

There will be a Cabin Fever Party at the Sandisfield Firehouse on Route 57 Saturday, March 5, 4–9 p.m. Plans include live music, a grand raffle, great food, and a penny auction that will be bigger than ever. This is the time to come out of your burrows and have a little fun. Proceeds go to the Ski Program and Arts and Scholastic extras for the school children of Otis and Sandisfield.

Snow date is Saturday, March 12. For information, call Erica Fay, Co-Chair of the Farmington River PTO, at 258-4037.

## *GRAVITY* CROSSES THE POND

*Gravity* is the title of a short documentary film on the Tenth Annual Gravity Car Race, held nearly ten years ago (Labor Day weekend of 1984) on Wallace Hall Road in Monterey. Local mechanically minded daredevils built brakeless coasting vehicles that were launched from a ramp at the top of the dirt road course. Crowds gathered at the sharp curve near the finish to see whether racers would make the turn or punch the bales of hay lined up for safety along the road's edge.

The film is the work of the Konkapot Big Boys, an independent film group based in New Marlborough. It was shot by John Sellew and his brother Sanjiban, and has an original score composed by Jay Amidon. Brook Walsh is seen giving the countdown for starts over a two-way radio, Lanny Lanoue speaks of the competition from the driver's seat of his three-wheeler, and Bill Russell, winner in what turned out to be the final year of the race, announces his retirement. Graceful cars speed down the sun-dappled woodland dirt road and slide through the turn.

That may be old hat to some around here, but *Gravity* was screened in Europe this past November at *3e Mondial de la Video*, a six day international film festival held in Brussels, with more than twenty countries represented. This must be as close as the famous Gravity Car Race has ever come to the homeland of its original inspirational figure, turn-of-the-century French photographer Lartigue. Perhaps the work of the Konkapot Big Boys will inspire some Belgian crazies to carry on the tradition. Lafayette—I mean Lartigue—can you hear us?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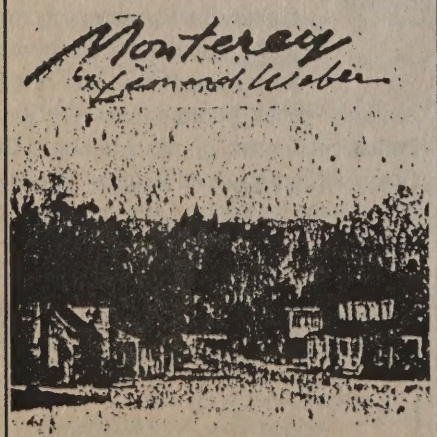

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# THE BIDWELL HOUSE

The Bidwell House is unique among historic museums in Berkshire County in that we are the only eighteenth century house museum on its original site which also owns almost all of its original acreage. Today we retain 190 of the 280 acres given to Reverend Adonijah Bidwell in 1750 by the inhabitants of Township Number One.

In 1992 the museum's Board of Directors and I, with Peter Jensen of OpenSpace Management in Great Barrington, wrote and adopted a ten year management plan to guide us in the use and preservation of our property. We were also accepted into the Forest Stewardship Incentive Program run by the United States Forest Service. This program is informally called SIP, and it pays 70% of the cost of many practices which encourage forest stewardship.

1993 saw the completion of our first year in the program. We made a foot trail from the museum parking lot to the site of Township Number One's first meeting house. We mowed our three fields, keeping them open to encourage wildlife, and installed six bluebird nesting boxes in them. Finally, we thinned our woods on both sides of Art School Road to improve the woodlot and allow for deeper vistas into the forest. We thank the Turkeybush Foundation of Monterey for their generous donation, which helped pay for costs not covered by SIP.

This February we begin the program's second year. Peter Jensen, who works with non-profits such as the Appalachian Trail Club and Jacob's Pillow, has marked three stands for timber management. There is a sugar bush on the eastern edge of our property which will be thinned by cutting species other than sugar maple. Thinning to improve the general quality of the forest will also be done in the southern end of the property. A cutting plan will be filed with the state and the Monterey Conservation Commission, and care will be taken to conserve the many stone walls in our woods. They are important historical features of the landscape. Results of the cutting will be improved forest, a road which will be incorporated into our network of trails, and income, some of which will be put into future land management projects.

In 1994 we will also create the Historic Interpretive Trail, which will encompass the ruins of many farm buildings on the property, and connect with the Meeting House Site Trail. Also, the museum has recently been awarded a grant from the Massachusetts Foundation for the Humanities to organize a symposium entitled "The Myth of the New England Landscape: Interpreting the Bidwell House Acreage."

*Bobby and Ronnie Kimberly in 1944. Photo courtesy of Mrs. Flora Touponce.*

The grant allows us to hire a scholar in each of three subjects: Native American studies, cultural geography, and agricultural history. These scholars will spend several days at the museum researching the Bidwell family archives and looking at the historical features still present on the property. We will also hire someone to conduct historical deed research and to map changes in boundaries and acreage from 1750 to the present. The June symposium will bring together these findings, and the information will then be published in an interpretive brochure which will help users of the trail understand many changes on the property since 1750.

The Bidwell House Land Management Plan has several goals. We hope our network of trails will draw those interested in nature, who may visit the house while they're here and perhaps become museum members. Through the educational program in environmental history and the interpretive brochure, the museum hopes to teach visitors new ways to understand the landscape. The study of changes in The Bidwell House property from the Native American period to the present may help us gain insight into our present day relationship with the land.

— Lisa Simpson

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## BIRCH, LADY OF THE FOREST

Remember birch beer? Along with ginger ale aged in oak kegs, and root beer made from roots whose location we knew, birch beer has a special place in the memory of anyone lucky enough to have tasted it.

Although nearly forty species of trees and shrubs are known as birch, the tree most commonly imagined whenever the name comes up is *Betula alba*, the white birch—useful for more than making canoes!

Both alcohol and boiling water are solvents for the medicinal properties of its bark and leaves. They have been used as diaphoretics, to bring on or increase perspiration. Some herbalists suggest drinking the tea when one is troubled with boils or skin eruptions.

*Betula lenta* is also known as black, spice, or sweet birch. Its inner bark has been made into a tea that has a good reputation as a mouthwash.

The inner bark and twigs of both these birches contains an oil that has sometimes been used as a substitute for oil of wintergreen. This is also the oil that gives good old-fashioned birch bark its memorable taste.

White birch is both graceful and easy to recognize on the hillside. Sweet birch is equally graceful, but the similarity between her bark and the bark of the wild cherry tree is sometimes confusing. A tiny scratch with the fingernail for a sniff of the inner bark will be enough to confirm any questionable identification. If you've found a birch, you'll smell her characteristic wintergreen odor.

This beautiful lady of the forest is short-lived, for a tree. Her life span generally runs less than four decades. As she ages, her bark begins to show irregular breaks. Still, she keeps her inner beauty and packs a lot of giving into her years.

— MaryKate Jordan

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## DEAR AGNES

Dear Agnes,

I've got a problem. I'm a Gould Farm logger. During the winter I split, chop, and haul a lot of wood. Sometimes it gets very cold and I've noticed that when I come out to work after having stirred my coffee with my thumb I can't grip the maul handle very well, as the thumb of my glove gets frozen stiff.

— Loose Grip

Dear L. G.,

On first reading this appeared to me a clear case of FLT, or frozen logger's thumb. However, two factors belie this diagnosis: (1) Most loggers don't even wear gloves until the temperature reaches five hundred degrees below zero, and (2) no real logger would deign to complain about such a piddling ailment, much less write it in a letter. A real logger is only allowed to complain if he's dead. (Even then there should be no hint of whining. It is permissible to say, "Pierre, tell the boys I can't make it tomorrow—I'm dead.")

Therefore I suggest you actually suffer from PTTPTAL disease (People Trying to Pretend They Are Loggers), and would benefit from a shift to the kitchen.

— Agnes

"Dear Agnes" is a regular feature in *Farm Yarn*, an in-house publication at Gould Farm. Reprinted here by permission.

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# NATURAL HISTORY NOTES

Picture the Berkshires of 1829. Were the hills wooded as they are today? Were creatures such as deer, raccoon, beaver, and turkey abundant? We often imagine that early New England was filled with trees, wildflowers, and all types of animals, and that it was twentieth century man who destroyed habitats and ruined ecosystems.

However, a fascinating book titled *A History of the County of Berkshire Massachusetts,* written by a number of "gentlemen in the county, clergymen and laymen," and published in 1829, tells a different story. A chapter called "Natural Productions" gives detailed information on the wild animals, birds, insects, reptiles, fish, and vegetation of the time, information which reveals that many animals now common in the Berkshires were then either nonexistent or rare. Note the antique nomenclature in this wildlife survey of the time, gleaned from that regional history.

Mammals common to the Berkshires of 1829 were woodchucks, skunks, rabbits, hares, several kinds of field rats and mice, also gray, red, and black squirrels (same black squirrels as those recently seen around here, or different?) and striped squirrels (now called chipmunks). Seen only occasionally were foxes (in North County), porcupines, and hedgehogs. Raccoons were present, but not abundant. The lynx, also called a wildcat or mountain cat, was very rare, but some had been seen in the hills of South County. Bears were also rare, sometimes appearing in the north. Deer were extremely rare, a most interesting circumstance from our present perspective. The author wrote, "Occasionally indeed a deer or a few bears pass along the Green Mountains into the north part of the county, and excite all the remnant of the old hunting spirit." Beavers were not even mentioned.

Common birds were the crow, blackbird, variegated or skunk blackbird (immature blackbird?), thrush, yellow robin (oriole), robin red breast, mocking bird, cat bird, chipping bird (chipping sparrow), ground bird (towhee?), wren, kingbird, redhe: ded woodpecker, woodcock, killdear (killdeer), phoebe, snowbird, whippoorwill, nighthawk, swallow, martin, pigeon (passenger pigeon), hummingbird, and the

dove. Heard or seen "often" were blue jays and the common (?) and screech owls. Occasionally seen were gulls (seventeen kinds now seen in the East), loons, the fish hawk, hen hawk (red-tailed hawk), pigeon or sly hawk (sharp-shinned hawk), snipe, kingfisher, and dodger (?). Eagles were rarely seen, and wild turkeys were totally gone at the time.

Frequently seen reptiles included the black water snake, the striped or streaked snake (garter snake), the small black or green snake (the young of black snake or green snake), various species of frog and toad, evets (efts or newts) and lizards (salamanders?). Rare were the green snake, the black snake or racer, the rattlesnake and the spotted or milk adder.

Limited quantities of fish were found in only a few varieties. Common species: the sucker, perch, dace, bull-head, flat fish (?), redfish (?), eel, and pickerel. Trout were not abundant. The black tortoise and muddy tortoise (snapping turtles) were abundant. Less common was the striped or spotted tortoise (painted turtle). Also mentioned was the large tortoise (a snapping turtle of twenty or thirty pounds) "whose flesh is considered by epicures as so great a luxury."

The 1829 list is interesting for what it *doesn't* mention. Some species have come into Berkshire County for the first time only recently (twenty or thirty years): opossum, black squirrel, coyote, raven, starling, English sparrow, house sparrow, purple loosestrife, ragweed, and the tent caterpillar.

Even more interesting is the phenomenon of species that once disappeared in Berkshire County, and have since returned, many of them only recently. We know that beavers, for example, were effectively trapped out of the Northeast by 1690, but are currently abundant. Whippoorwills died out in the DDT era of this century; a few are back within sixty miles of here. Bears head the list for size; bluebirds, perhaps, for beauty. Lynxes, bobcats, fishers, otters, even an occasional mountain lion are now reported. The wild turkey was artificially re-introduced, and has become wildly successful, and tame around some farms and birdfeeders.

Changes in habitat account in part for these shifts in the local wildlife population. By 1829 Berkshire County was approaching its period of most widespread cultivation and deforestation. Charcoal burners turned whole mountainsides into pasture. But the iron industry requiring charcoal is long gone, and extensive farming has moved west. So the forest has returned, and with it the deer and large predators. Turkeys in particular thrive on acorns (a source for them of vitamin A), once again abundant as the oaks reach maturity in our regenerated forest. Summer homes are replacing farms, claiming only small clearings in the present-day woodlands, compared to the large acreage once cleared to procure humans a living from the land.

It seems that a new ecological balance is coming into place, a kind of Peaceable Kingdom where our original wildlife can coexist with a new human population in Berkshire County.

—Lisa Simpson & David McAllester

Readers who want to explore the subject further will enjoy *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England,* written by William Cronon and published by Hill & Wang, New York, 1983; and *Ceremonial Time: Fifteen Thousand Years on One Square Mile*, written by John Hanson Mitchell and published by Houghton Mifflin, New York, 1991.

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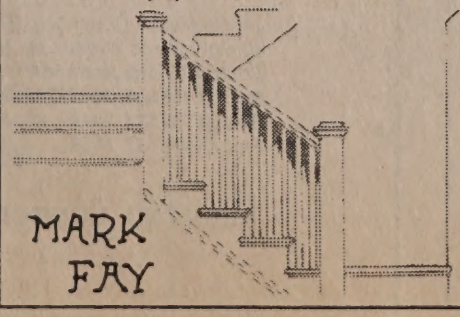

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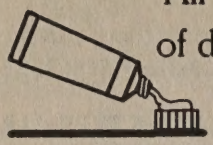

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## CHURCH NEWS

During the winter months our church moves its worship celebration downstairs to the community room. Our time together is more informal, intimate, and focuses on study and sharing. We take an in-depth look at the Bible (this year the book of Ephesians) and share our thoughts and insights as we affirm that this ancient writing still has relevance today.

Gathering in a circle allows us to face one another and stimulates a warmth of spirit. It also keeps us physically warm, especially this winter, with its arctic blast of frigid air freezing everything in sight.

We've started singing a new hymn in our circle gathering. Initially unknown to everyone, the song has caught our fancy with its seasonal subject matter written by Samuel Longfellow. The traditional English melody was arranged by Ralph Vaughn Williams. The first verse goes like this:

'Tis winter now; the fallen snow
Has left the heavens all coldly clear;
Through leafless boughs the sharp winds blow,
And all the earth lies dead and drear.

In reflecting on the hymn we had an interesting observation. Even though winter is considered a "dead and drear" time of the year, there is an irony: winter also holds a beauty that breathes the very essence of spiritual depth. With its stark appearance comes a deeper appreciation of wintry light and sound. Colors, textures, and shadows offer a simple yet unique visual image of creation, while the silence after a snowfall is so overwhelming that it creates a sound all its own. Clearly, creation is still alive with a divine presence!

And yet God's love is not withdrawn;
His life within the keen air breathes;
His beauty paints the crimson dawn,
And clothes the boughs with glittering wreaths.

For some of us winter is an affirmation that the Creator's hand is even more profoundly present than in the warm colors of other seasons, thereby bringing our faith more sharply into focus. It is in the wintry moments of life—sorrow, despair, isolation—that the human cry of anguish arises. The hope of our faith confirms that we are not alone, that the warmth of God's love never freezes over no matter how frigid the circumstances of life.

O God! who givest the winter's cold,
As well as summer's joyous rays,
Us warmly in thy love enfold,
And keep us through life's wintry days.

What better place to be on a sub zero Sunday morning than sitting in a circle with friends, sharing the warmth of loving fellowship with each other, and, of course, with God.

— Cliff Aerie

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The firefly flickers of God's grace
are enough to embrace the unknown.
A surge of powerful surrender
takes over all my looking back,
and ever so gently and hopefully
I risk the road of another year.

— Joyce Rupp

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## OPTION

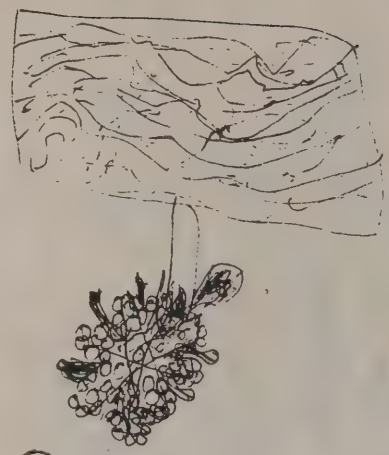
*I that could have walked*
*and passed you by*
*and not seen heaven*
*in your eye*

*am now abrim*
*the maw of hell*
*for that I love you*
*far too well*

*yet time*
*will surely crucify*
*and—life be praised!—*
*will let me die*

*consumed at last*
*by love's bright fire*
*my scrap of heaven*
*left entire.*

— A. O. Howell




[Mistletoe]

## WINTER HAIKU

*Snow drifts piling high*
*Out come mittens, caps, and sleds*
*Children having fun.*

— Eleanor Kimberly

## THE WORK OF OUR HANDS

*"He did it for his hands,"*
*my grandmother said, "after*
*the arthritis set in."*

*They hang heavy in old*
*photographs, large-knuckled,*
*fabled for cracking walnuts*
*between the index finger*
*and the thumb, hands turned*
*on the spun wheel*
*of a lifetime's labor.*

*Now I keep*
*a worn table scarf*
*embroidered with red roses*
*faded but shaded finely,*
*rising from gold*
*calyxes on gold-green stems,*
*the last testament*
*of my grandfather's hands.*

*For his hands. Others knew*
*him as a man who fumbled.*
*Everything slipped, his*
*stables, wagons and accounts,*
*his Transfer Company fell*
*between his fingers.*

*What transfers then?*
*No gene for needlework. Only*
*that sleight of mind*
*that quicker than all eyes*
*conjures up the self's*
*surprise, plucks images*
*from Eden.*

— Royal Shepard

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University Editions, West Virginia, 1993

## ON KING DAY DURING A SNOWSTORM

*Not the true but a truth*
*contradictory enough no*
*matter*
*is simple—opens the earth door*
*the storm drain*
*feeds a soul.*
*No amount of logos takes its place*
*its face lacks no compassion*
*love emanates from its silent utterance.*
*It moves beyond convention*
*embraces no prohibition*
*is not constrained by a diction*
*not limited by exclusion in its wording*
*welcomes descent when it comes*
*goes unharmed by its enemies*
*exists in every dream and in its*
*waking circle.*

— Connell McGrath

## EUCALYPTUS / FRUIT TREES

***Memories of Chile***

*Syllables like moths flew higher than*
*those apple trees, higher than*
*that eucalyptus canopy which*
*flared over trails*
*rich with sunlit blackberries.*
*Fragrant with promise*
*the Southern Cross shimmered like*
*fever. Volcanoes*
*coral as salmon*
*thrashed upstream to spawn*
*like nectar coalesced on*
*dream thread, on hope weave,*
*on English-speaking blue eyes*
*accustomed to the North Star,*
*to the Big Dipper.*
*Summer draws that southern orchard to*
*fulfillment while my*
*home hills lie frozen*
*in snowdrift, in wind chill, in*
*Monterey Massachusetts.*

— MaryKate Jordan

## MARIE'S POEM

*The goats are doing well*
*The milk is coming slow*
*The snow is getting deeper*
*And the snow is falling light*
*The picnic bench is covered*
*And so is everything else*
*And the candle is burning low*

— Tarsi Dunlop

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# MAGIC OF THE LITTLE SAW-WHET

I have held in my hand the tiny body of a saw-whet owl. She was so unlucky as to fly across the road just as a truck came by, and though she back-watered mightily with her long strong wings, she crashed anyway into the grille of the huge beast, thus ending her days in the dark woods.

Saw-whets are our littlest owls, only seven to eight inches long from the top of the head to the end of the short (three-inch) tail. This owl I held, without her feathers and her big head, was only the size of a large plum. Picture a chicken, ready for the oven, just two and a half inches long. The saw-whet has no ear-tufts, and a quick look at the smoothly rounded head might leave you wondering how she can hear the movements of little deer-mice in the woods at night. But once this frozen owl had thawed a bit, we were able to part the feathers on her face, and there we found she had huge ears! They are slits in the skin, looking a bit like the gill-openings of some fish, and she can open them to more than an inch across in both dimensions. They lie within the face "disk" common to all the owls, and the feathers of this disk are specially arranged to let the owl focus her attention, her sight, and her hearing like a moveable satellite dish antenna, fine-tuneable.

The saw-whet nests in dark forests, usually near some source of water. She finds an abandoned hollow tree-hole, and is said to like especially those constructed by flickers. Her eggs are laid on the floor of the cavity on the woodchips left by the original builder. She lays one egg every day or two until she has from four to seven eggs, and her incubation starts as soon as the first or second egg is laid. The result is that the babies hatch out over a period as long as two weeks. If you were ever lucky enough to have a look, you might find new-hatched owls and two-week young in the same nest.

Most people go through life never seeing a saw-whet owl, even though they may be on the lookout for them or even searching for them. One person who is considered quite an owl specialist in this country spent many weeks tapping on hollow trees in dark woods in Maine, hoping to see a saw-whet come to the doorway. He saw many flying squirrels and screech owls, but no saw-whets. Finally, on a nature walk in New York's Central Park, he saw his saw-whet. It was perched on the branch of a low shrub, and it allowed the walkers to come close and even handle it with no signs of alarm. They replaced it on its perch and it did not fly off. In fact, it came back day after day to the same perch and submitted to much further handling. This is the reputation saw-whets have, of being tame and trusting.

The reason these little owls are so rarely seen is that they are strictly nocturnal, and even when they are active at night, they stay in the woods. Occasionally a hard winter or a storm will drive hundreds of birds south in search of food. At such times the saw-whets may enter farm buildings looking for mice. One farmer found a little owl which had spent the night in his barn. In one night it had killed seven pigeons, and even the smallest of these was more than twice the size of the owl. What would one little owl do with all these pigeons? I'm not sure, but saw-whets do have the habit of storing mice, frozen, and then thawing them by incubating the frozen meat as if it were an egg.

Saw-whets look larger than they are because of the way they fluff up their feathers, especially on the head, and because of their remarkable wing-span, which is usually eighteen to twenty inches. (Remember, the body which supports these wings is only the size of a plum!)

The name saw-whet refers to the voice of the owl from February through April, which is the mating time. It gives a repeated metallic syllable which sounds like a saw being filed. Usually this starts out slowly and gets faster, ending abruptly. This is the best-known of the saw-whet's calls, but according to Audubon it also makes a sound like the ringing of a distant bell, much less strident than the saw-filing call. It can also make a whistle which sounds like "whurdle-whurdle-whurdle," and a low metallic "cook," and a sound much like a Robin's whistle, and something like the muffled or choked squawking of a chicken. When giving any of these calls, a saw-whet may put a ventriloquial twist on its voice so that it seems to be coming from far away, or from some other direction, when it is actually nearby.

The saw-whet's feet are white and furry with four toes and sweet little curved needles for talons. Her dark tail is barely tipped with white and there are two rows of spots farther up, making the loveliest design of softly interrupted bars.

I wish I knew the little saw-whet in life, but for now I am happy to have met her at all. Some say the owl is a mystical, magic bird, and I think it must be true since I still feel myself to be under her spell, personally changed for the better by her ears, the feathers of her face, the chestnut brown streaks of her breast.

— Bonner J. McAllester

P. MURKETT

*Looking north across Stevens Pond.*

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# WILD LIFE SURVEY

## Mammals

The bears are sleeping peacefully through all this snowy and frigid weather. However, they do come out briefly during the warm spells we can expect from now on. Deer are moving down from the high country for the browse in swamps and thickets. A bobcat was seen coming along the shore of Lake Garfield in the first week of January, and in late December one gave a piercing scream on the east edge of Beartown Forest. One coyote was spotted in the corner of the Duryea meadow. Their range of five to fifteen miles is much reduced in the deep snow. Dale saw fisher tracks this month, and an ermine that has been frequenting a doghouse on Art School Road. Mrs. Marcel Pasche saw a white weasel (ermine) outside her house on Tyringham Road on January 5. It had a narrow band of black around its tail, near the tip. Dale Duryea saw a muskrat house in Lake Garfield that had been ripped open by a fox or coyote. Much of the lake has become uninhabitable for muskrats due to the drawdown.

There was another alarm in Monterey caused by a bite by an unidentified cat. The cat was quarantined and found to be healthy, which is how the incident we reported a month ago turned out. Nonetheless, everyone should be wary of approaching stray cats. A rabid bite is a mortal danger. Be sure *your* cat is vaccinated!

## Birds

On December 26 at nine in the morning there were forty-four (!) wild turkeys at Ed Salsitz' bird feeder on Beartown Mountain Road. The McAllesters saw a small flock on the Nash-Hawley Road on January 12, and Dale Duryea saw two big toms on the road in Tyringham Valley. Joe Baker and David McAllester have both seen a pileated woodpecker swooping through the woods at the east end of Hupi Road in mid January. Eleanor Kimberly saw two starlings January 7. David and Susan McAllester saw and heard a robin as it flew over their house on January 13, and Bonner saw five red polls at her feeder January 17. Loul McIntosh adds a tree sparrow (winter chippie) to her list, at Gould Farm.

## Insects

Loul's daughter Margrit, visiting for the holidays, saw a dozen spiders of assorted species, two unidentified caterpillars, snowfleas (springtails), leaf hoppers, four assorted flies, and two snow, or scorpion, flies, all on December 21. She is an entomologist, and we have her professional acuity to thank for these rare winter sightings.

## Plants

If you're wondering why the "common" names of plants aren't sufficient to identify them, here's the reason why, from some lists I've seen lately: Dandelion is also known as Blowball, Cankerwort, Dashaloga, Doonhead Clock, Dumbledore, Faceclock, Fortune-Teller, Horse-Gowan, Grunsel, Irish-Daisy, Lion's-Tooth, Milk-Gowan, Monk's-Head, One O'Clock, Pee-da-Bed, Pissabed, Pissenlit, Priest's Crown,

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Puffball, Swine-Snout, White-Endive, Wild-Endive, Witch-Gowan, Yellow-Gowan.

Ox-Eye-Daisy is also known as Bachelor's Buttons, Bog Daisy, Bull Daisy, Bull's-Eye, Bull's-Eye Daisy, Butter Daisy, Daisy, Dog Daisy, Dog Blow, Dutch-Curse, Dutch-Cuss, Dutch-Morgan, Field Daisy, Goldens, Great White Ox-Eye, Herb-Margaret, Horse Daisy, Hungarian-Daisy, Kellup-Weed, Maudlin Daisy, Maudlinwort, Midsummer Daisy, Moon Daisy, Moonflower, Moon-Penny, Pismire, Poorland Daisy, Poverty-Weed, Rhode-Island-Clover, Russian daisy, Sherrif-Pink, White Daisy, White-Man's-Weed, White-Weed.

— David P. McAllester

## THE OBSERVER - DECEMBER

We're writing this report on December's weather after three weeks of very cold weather in January, which makes it hard to believe that the average December temperature was above the regional norm by nearly five degrees. The coldest temperatures occurred toward the end of the month, and were the early part of the snap that made headlines across the country in Janaury.

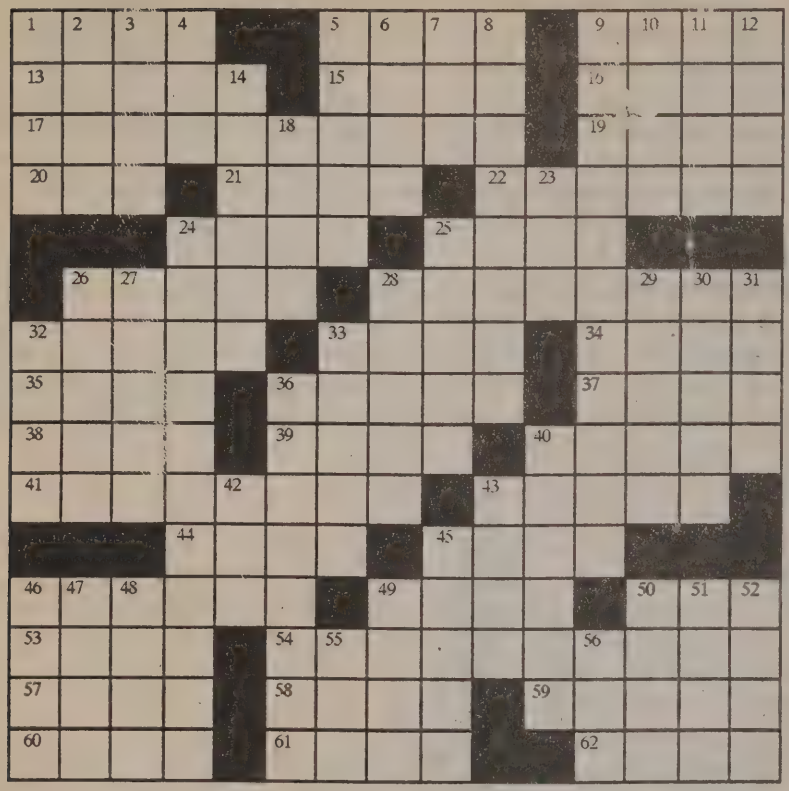
We had four inches less snow here in Monterey than Pittsfield had, and about half an inch less rain, but our total precipitation for the month of December was almost exactly the regional norm. We had snow for Christmas, what more can we ask? These are the numbers:

| | |
|---|---|
| High temp (12/3) | 50° |
| Low temp. (12/29) | -7° |
| Avg. high temp. | 38° |
| Avg. low temp. | 22° |
| Avg. temp. | 30° |
| Monthly norm. (Pitts.) | 25.3° |
| Precip. occ. | 16 days |
| Total precip. | 12.5" snow / 3.75" rain |
| Monthly norm. (Pitts.) | 3.7" |
| High bar. press. (12/1) | 30.85 |
| Low bar. press. (12/11) | 29.46 |
| High humidity (12/24) | 97% |
| Low humidity (12/22) | 54% |
| Avg. wind speed | 11 mph |
| High wind gust (12/21) | 55 mph |

"'Tis said we've been extinct for 5000 years!"

# THE SAME OLD RESOLUTIONS

By Ted Tchack



## ACROSS

1 Hair style
5 Drinks
9 Son of Noah
13 Water birds
15 Memo
16 Source of poi
17 NUMBER 1
19 Thereabouts
20 Catherine or Agnes
21 Comfort
22 Little girl
24 Concern
25 Curtsies
26 Tails
28 NUMBER 2
32 Projectiles
33 Blemishes
34 Persian poet
35 To the calm side
36 Mild curse
37 Game like lotto
38 Valuable crop
39 Prefix for alien
40 Flies
41 Sirens,e.g.
43 Wash
44 Goes wrong
45 Warble
46 Kind of acid
49 Ollie's pal
50 Charge
53 Mine outputs
54 Racist
57 Unusual
58 Cleaner
59 Pay
60 Finishes
61 Farm output
62 Florida county

## DOWN

1 "___well!"
2 Measure
3 Stein flower
4 Single
5 Medicinal plant
6 Theater area
7 Ordinal suffix
8 Prearranged maneuvers
9 NUMBER 3
10 Instrument
11 Gaelic
12 Kind of court
14 Perspires
18 Organs
23 Be obliged
24 NUMBER 4
25 Baseballer Sal
26 French room
27 Elite
28 Looks over
29 Signs
30 Scope
31 Amor
32 Loony
33 Teen-___
36 NUMBER 5
40 Champion
42 Numerical prefix
43 Foreign capital
45 Desists
46 Ripped
47 Irish island
48 Dweeb
49 Men only
50 Personification of rumor
51 Girl's name
52 Feminine ending
55 Egg ___
56 Radical

# INDIAN NOTES

## Mahican Minutemen and Diplomats

By the summer of 1774, Stockbridge, like other New England towns, was holding meetings declaring the tea tax illegal, and the British abolishment of trial by jury to be unconstitutional and oppressive. War with England was anticipated, and two militia companies were formed in Stockbridge. Some of the Stockbridge Indians became Minutemen, and Jehoakin Metohksin, son of Johannis, was a Second Lieutenant. They were urged by John Hancock and other rebel leaders in Boston to join the Revolution, and on April 11, 1775, Solomon Unhaunauwaunmut, who was then head sachem, replied in part:

Brothers, whenever I see your blood running, you will soon find me about you to revenge my brothers' blood. Although I am low and very small, I will grip hold of your enemy's heel, that he cannot run so fast and so light, as if he had nothing at his heels.

Brother: One thing I ask of you if you send for me to fight, that you will let me fight in my own Indian way. I am not used to fight English fashion, therefore you must not expect I can train like your men. Only point out to me where your enemies keep, and that is all I shall want to know.

Word came to Stockbridge on April 21 of the Battle of Lexington and Concord, and at sunrise the next day the two companies, including seventeen Indians, left for Boston. They were in Cambridge in less than a week, and the Stockbridges set up their wigwams in the woods on the site of what is now Inman Square. Others came to join them. Jacob and Daniel Konkapot were there, and Daniel Wauwaumpequanaunt, and a father and son, both named William Notonksion.

As the long seige of Boston dragged through the summer, the Stockbridges engaged in scouting forays against the British advance pickets. One British officer complained, "Never had the British army so ungenerous an enemy to oppose; they send their riflemen (five or six at a time), who conceal themselves behind trees &c till an opportunity presents itself of taking a shot at our advanced sentries, which done they immediately retreat. What an infamous method of carrying on a war!"

One of the chaplains to the American troops was William Emerson, grandfather of Ralph Waldo Emerson. He wrote to his wife of a visit to the Indian camp: "I had ye pleasure of sitting down with 'em at a fine mess of clams, cooked and eat in ye true genuine Indian taste. I wish you had been there to see how generously they put their fingers into ye dish, and picked out some of ye largest clams to give me, & with what a gust I eat them. Be sure it is the greatest diversion I have had since I have been in ye camp."

The first Indians to die in the patriot cause were Abraham Naunauphtaunk and William Notonksion, Sr. Ironically, they were wounded by American fire, apparently on a night foray against British sentries.

Both sides in the conflict feared that the opposition would enlist the aid of Canadian and American Indians. Among the emissaries visiting undecided tribes were leaders of the Stockbridge Indians. Shortly after the surprise and capture of Fort Ticonderoga and Crown Point, Captain Abraham Nimham came by with another Stockbridge as companion, carrying a wampum belt to the Caughnawaga, St. Francis, and other Canadian tribes to urge them to stay out of the conflict. Ethan Allen gave Nimham a letter:

> By advice of counsel I recommend our trusty and beloved friend and brother Capt. Abraham Nimham of Stockbridge as our Imbassador [*sic*] of peace to our good brother Indians of the four tribes.
>
> ...As King George's men first killed our men we hope as Indians are good and honest men you will not fight for King George against us as we have done you no wrong and would chuse to live with you as brothers...
>
> But if your brother Indians do not fight on either side, still we will be friends and brothers and you may come and hunt in our woods and pass thro' our country in the Lake and come to our forest and have rum and be good friends.

The Indian delegation was captured near Fort St. John. They were brought to Quebec where the Governor, Guy Carleton, had them court-martialed and condemned to be hanged for conspiring to incite the Canadian Indians against the British. The Caughnawagas protested bitterly. Some of them even offered their lives in exchange for those of the Stockbridges, and others threatened to become enemies of the British. Under these pressures Carleton decided to release Nimham and his companion. Five Canadian chiefs with their wives and children escorted the Stockbridges to Crown Point, where they arrived on June 10. Several of Ethan Allen's officers made up a fund from their own pockets to present to the chiefs in friendship and to compensate Abraham Nimham for the beating he had received from the soldiers at Fort St. John. The Stockbridges also sent messages, supported by wampum belts, to the Shawnees in Ohio.

The Continental Congress formed commissions to persuade all the Indian tribes to join their cause. One such group met the Iroquois at German Flats and Albany in the last two weeks of August, 1775. Solomon Unhaunauwaunmut was there with a group of Stockbridges. A secretary-treasurer for the commissioners (and later *aide de camp* to General Washington), Tench Tilghman, wrote in his memoirs about how attractive the Stockbridge girls were and how prettily they sang the hymns that were part of the entertainment. He found them superior to the women in Albany, and wrote of his wish to "make an acquaintance among them."

Further accounts of Mahicans in the Revolution will appear in later issues of the *News*.

— David P. McAllester

## CONTRIBUTORS

We received donations this past month from

Leonard & Lynn Weisman (two months in a row!)
Paul W. Walter, Jr.

so we get to bestow lavish thanks on the few. We're always grateful for your generous support, without which there would be no *News*, not good news.

# VOXED

## Round Trips

My father was a banker. He's retired now, but that was his lifelong occupation. During the Great Depression he was drawn to the study of economics and then the practice of banking as he looked for a measure of organized certainty in a time of painful economic chaos. His was the world of three percent savings accounts, the carefully nurtured nest egg, gradual increase.

Woodworking has always been my livelihood. I had no conscious plan starting out, knowing only that I liked to use my hands, and make things of wood. I followed my nose into a life of shopwork. You might think we have little in common, but peel back the romantic veneer with which many cover the life of the craftsman, and likewise set aside the familiar sketch of the banker performing his calculations in a room far above street level. Underneath is a common urge simply to organize, or reorganize, some unlikely stuff. The woodworker takes lively, ever-changing trees and makes them over into relatively stable, durable, largely rectilinear useful objects; the banker offers a chance to make over fluid social and economic relationships into relatively stable, predictable, numerical agreements. It's not a stretch to say that we both apply simple rules to complex, unruly stuff, and enjoy good results when luck runs with us. We organize what we can.

Much in my life is not well organized, but one thing under reasonable control is recycling. I actually *like* to put the certain kinds of paper, plastic, and metal in their certain places, then move them from their places in my household to their larger places organized by the town. I *like* to rip the plastic windows out of envelopes, put those scraps in the trash and use the paper scraps to start fires in the woodstove. With pleasure I take each red plastic top off each cider jug, step on the jug, and throw the two separately into the bin.

My satisfaction in these chores has two components: one is the bone I must throw to the organizer in me anyway; the other is a satisfaction felt in taking tiny, exquisitely reasoned steps to address absurdly huge social problems (like saving small change in the face of the Great Depression). Usually I figure these organizational impulses contribute something to the general good while satisfying a personal need, but sometimes I just feel like a lifer in a reasoning fool's paradise. Hope comes and goes, one sort of trouble gives way to the next—what does reason have to do with it? When I stumble on such doubts, I like to look up and out, away from my usual view.

With this in mind I visited the outfit called Master Garbologist, up to its elbows in the local recycling scene. Joe and Robin Mallory of New Marlborough, husband and wife, own the business, which is trucking. "He's a trucker," says Anton Louw, who heads up a crew that sorts and bales recyclable plastics collected by the Master Garbologist. "A trucker with a conscience, but a trucker." The trucker shows in the cared-for look of all of Joe Mallory's sky blue rigs, as if fresh paint and tune-ups are routine. The conscience of the Master Garbologist shows in a long term, friendly effort to promote and establish local recycling. Robin works the phone, and Joe is in and out driving trucks, talking route and schedule with Robin on the two-way radio, picking up and tipping, hauling trash and recyclable materials wherever the market leads. Together they do about all two people in one business can do to tame the chaos of contemporary waste.

It's pretty chaotic. Handling, processing, storing, and hauling recyclable stuff costs money up front. Markets are volatile. The efforts of government, corporations, and individuals are uncoordinated, transitional, uncertain. I asked Joe how he feels, deeply involved as he is in one of the major intractable problems of our time. I thought he might say something about being in on the ground floor, or slowly gaining on it. "Stupid," he said, with an intent look and a cheerful smile.

I went in to help Anton and his crew at the conveyor for a while. The mixed plastics that Joe picks up in Monterey and other transfer stations are dumped into a beat-up

P. MURKETT

*Materials and tools of the trade at the Master Garbologist. Small baler in the background.*

plywood hopper by a small front end loader. Anton drives the loader with the close-quarters speed and skill of a New York City parking garage attendant. He zooms into the pile of lightweight plastic—detergent containers, milk and cider jugs, peanut butter jars, ketchup bottles, soda bottles, booze bottles—scoops up a shovelful, backs, turns, and dumps it into the hopper, backs and turns again, zooms, scoops, backs, turns, dumps—maybe eight times until the hopper is full. The loader, baler, and conveyors are all making a racket inside the building, deep snow and bitter cold outside. Everyone is dressed in coveralls. A conveyor feeds us a stream of grimy, wet, mixed plastic from the hopper, and we are fully occupied picking out blow molded natural (uncolored) HDPE small mouth containers (high density polyethylene—milk and cider jugs, mostly, Number Two recyclable plastic), removing caps if necessary, and tossing the containers onto another conveyor at right angles to the first. The sorted, single-type thermoplastic resin then moves up that conveyor into a machine where studded rollers flatten the jugs before spilling them into a steel-walled chamber; there a volume of the stuff is compacted, several presses to a bale. Other types of plastic containers are sorted off the conveyor by hand into large plastic bags pinned to a frame of two by fours. We twist polypropylene caps off bottles made of other plastics and toss the caps into a barrel. It takes a lot of caps to make a marketable load of polypropylene, which Anton calls the plastic of the future. It makes good threaded caps as well as extremely long fibers, such as those used to weave feed bags these days.

Also valuable but problematic are five-gallon lexan water jugs. They are cleaned and reused at Berkshire Spring Water in Southfield until they get cracked or punctured, then the Master Garbologist bales them. Twist off any remaining tops, load a smaller baling machine with the jugs, run the press, open and fill again, compact again, open, fill, compact—six or eight times to a bale. Crushing it causes a string of explosions as the tough plastic breaks. Lexan is so strong it doesn't compact as tightly as other plastics, so bales are lighter, and occupy more space per pound. Also, there's not much local use of the material, and its strength makes it a relatively durable plastic, so it takes years to make a marketable load. At least it's relatively clean.

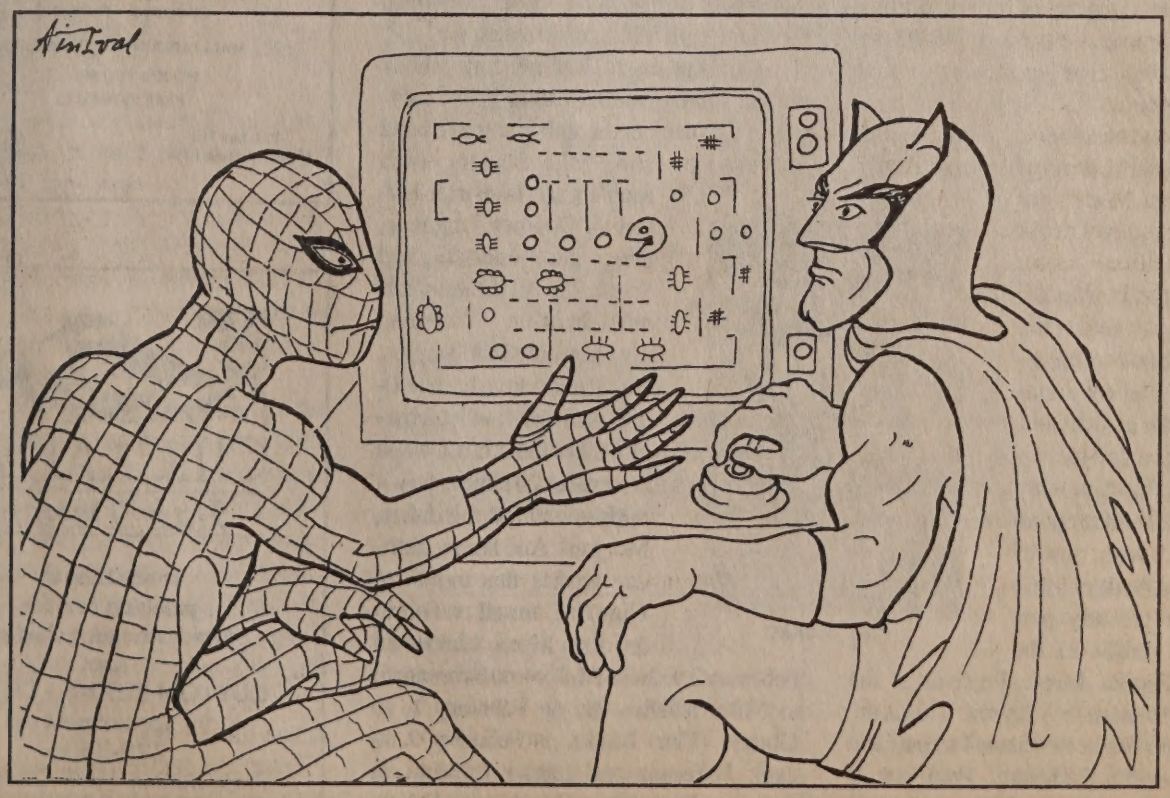
The noise and motion in this place relieve my uneasiness about the pure logic of social activism. Better than the neat piles on my back porch, better than the neatly organized and exhaustive book *Western Massachusetts Solid Waste Management Guide*, the scene here makes clear the chaotic waste of our culture, the real circumstances of contemporary life, and the nature of our efforts to solve problems. The shopwork, the sorting and baling, speaks most clearly to me.

Anton shuts down the machines for a break and I ask him how *he* feels about his place in the larger scheme of things. "Stupid," he says. "It's better than throwing the stuff away, but not by much."

That answer again, not unlike my own doubts. But in the company of the Masters I feel less stupid, and quite certain that they're not at all stupid themselves. The answer's a nod to the limits on our organizing powers, with a wink to small steps on long journeys.

I'll go back to sort plastics with the crew every now and then for the boost they give me, if I can only organize my time.

— Peter Murkett



"But these home video games are ruining our reading public!"

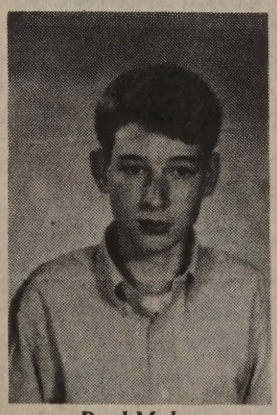
# PERSONAL NOTES

Hearty congratulations to **Jeffrey** and **Hannah Pedersen Moran** on the birth of their first child, a daughter, Elise Kaitlyn. Elise was born on December 30 in Pittsfield, weighing in at eight pounds, ten ounces. Proud Monterey grandparents are Alf and Lena Pedersen of Main Road.

Hats off to **Tarsi Dunlop**, who is beating Grandpa Welles Sellew at the seven card stud poker challenge. At last report, Tarsi was harboring a huge pile of chips, with her opponent down to only about three. Seems Welles will be throwing his hat in the ring soon (in his typically good-natured manner, of course). Good work, Tarsi! And, just maybe you should get that haircut, Welles!

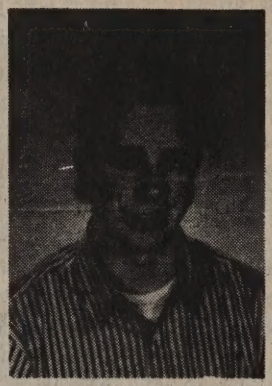
Welcome back to **Dick** and **Barbara Tryon**, who recently attended a Farm Bureau convention in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, and also took a three-day cruise in "not so hot" weather. Dick and Barbara most enjoyed an afternoon in Boca Raton visiting **Clara Lankenau**, a longtime Monterey connection. They had a wonderful time visiting at her condo, and report that she is ninety-five years young—looks and feels terrific, entertaining lots of friends, driving them all to lunch, and truly enjoying herself. Great to hear good news about Monterey friends.

Our congratulations to juniors **Joshua Aerie** and **Paul Makuc**, who were recently inducted into Monument Mountain Regional High School's National Honor Society chapter in a candlelight ceremony held at the high school auditorium following a dinner for members and their families. Current members participating included Monterey students Erin and Meghan Sadlowski. Josh, son of Cliff and Jan Aerie of Main Road, also recently performed as cellist in the Western District Music Festival at the UMass auditorium in Amherst. This is the third year he has been selected to perform with the District Orchestra. Paul, son of Henry and Anne Marie Makuc of Main Road, makes it seven for seven of "the Makuc kids" to be inducted as National Honor Society members! Congratulations to him also on his election as president of the junior class at Monument.



*Paul Makuc*

Kudos to senior **Micole Raab**, daughter of Jerry and Giuliana Raab, who achieved Honors at Berkshire School for the first semester, and to sophomore **Joel Schick**, son of Joel and Alice Schick, who made High Honors for the fall term at Phillips Exeter Academy in Exeter, New Hampshire.



*Joshua Aerie*

Apologies to all Monterey students not recognized last issue on Mount Everett's first quarter honor roll list. Our congratulations to **Kathryn Kopetchny** and **Jeffrey Pilot** in grade nine who made Honors, and to **Joseph Kopetchny** who made High Honors, and to **Ian Rodgers** and **David Shea** in grade seven, who both achieved Honors. Good job, all of you! I hope I'll have it together next quarter. Can I plead holiday insanity?

Our very best to **Virginia Wasiuk**, part time Hupi Road resident, as she begins the job she really wanted, with the District Attorney's Office in St. Louis, Missouri. Good for you, Virginia! Break a leg?

Our best also to **Tasha Grotz**, who is among fifteen Dartmouth students studying in Germany at the university in Mainz for the winter term. Aside from the "tired head" as she immerses herself in another language, things are wonderful, and *Sesame Street* in German is most helpful. Weekend traveling is definitely a plus.

It must have been holiday madness that let **Morgan Clawson**'s birthday on December 20 slip past us—happy belated birthday, Morgan! And happy birthday wishes this month to **Gige O'Connell** on February 1, to **Mark Makuc** on February 2, to **John Mulroy** on February 6, to **Mike Mielke, Jr.** on February 7, to **Claude (Tim) Burke** on February 9, to **Jack Jefferson** and **Lanny Lanoue** on February 14, to **Dave Gauthier** on February 15, to **Maryellen Brown** on February 16, to **Kimberly Gero** and **James Hall** on **February 18**, to **Rachel Rodgers** on February 20, to **Maggie Clawson** on February 22, to **Jim Edelman** on February 23, to **Mark Amstead** on February 26, to **Paul Makuc** and **Morgan Schick** on February 27, and to the Leap Year Kid, **Shaen O'Connor** on February 29!

And, very happy anniversary wishes to **Rick** and **Deb Mielke** on January 9, to **Gerry** and **Marge McMahon** (their fifty-third) on the Cape February 7, and to **Don** and **Pat Amstead** on February 27.

Thanks for your contributions! Any news, birthdays, etc. you would like to share, please give me a call at 528-4519, or drop them in the mail to me, just Route 23. It is appreciated!

— Stephanie Grotz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## CALENDAR

**Saturday, February 5** Free movie, *Star Trek,* (1966), starring Jeffrey Hunter and Susan Oliver, 7:30 p.m. in the basement of the Monterey Library. Refreshments. Call 528-3795.

**Saturday, February 12**

Free movie, *Tarzan the Ape Man,* (1932) starring Johnny Weismuller and Maureen O'Sullivan, 7:30 p.m. in the basement of the Monterey Library. Refreshments. Call 528-3795.

Square and Contra Dance, New England style, at the Sheffield Grange, Route 7, Sheffield, Mass., 8:30-11:30 p.m. Beginners and children welcome. All dances taught by caller Joe Baker, music by Mountain Laurel. Refreshments served. Adults $5, children $2 to dance until intermission. Information: 413-528-9385 or 518-329-7578.

**Tuesday, February 15** Free blood pressure clinic, downstairs at Town Hall, 9-10:30 a.m.

**Saturday, February 19** Deadline for submissions to the Children's Art Show sponsored by the Southern Berkshire Youth Association and Frames on Wheels. Phone 528-6080 for details.

**Monday, February 21** Presidents Day Skating Party at the Monterey Town Rink in the pavilion behind the Firehouse, 12 noon–3 p.m. Sponsored by the Southern Berkshire Youth Association. Information, 528-6080.

**Saturday, February 26** Square and Contra Dance, New England style, at the Sheffield Grange, Route 7, Sheffield, Mass., 8:30-11:30 p.m. This program is for people who have some square or contradance experience. All dances taught by caller Joe Baker, music by Mountain Laurel. Refreshments served. Admission $5. Information: 413-528-9385 or 518-329-7578.

**Saturday, March 5** Cabin Fever Party at the Sandisfield Firehouse on Route 57, 4–9 p.m. (See p. 5) Snow date is Saturday, March 12. For information, call 258-4037.

## ANSWERS TO PUZZLE

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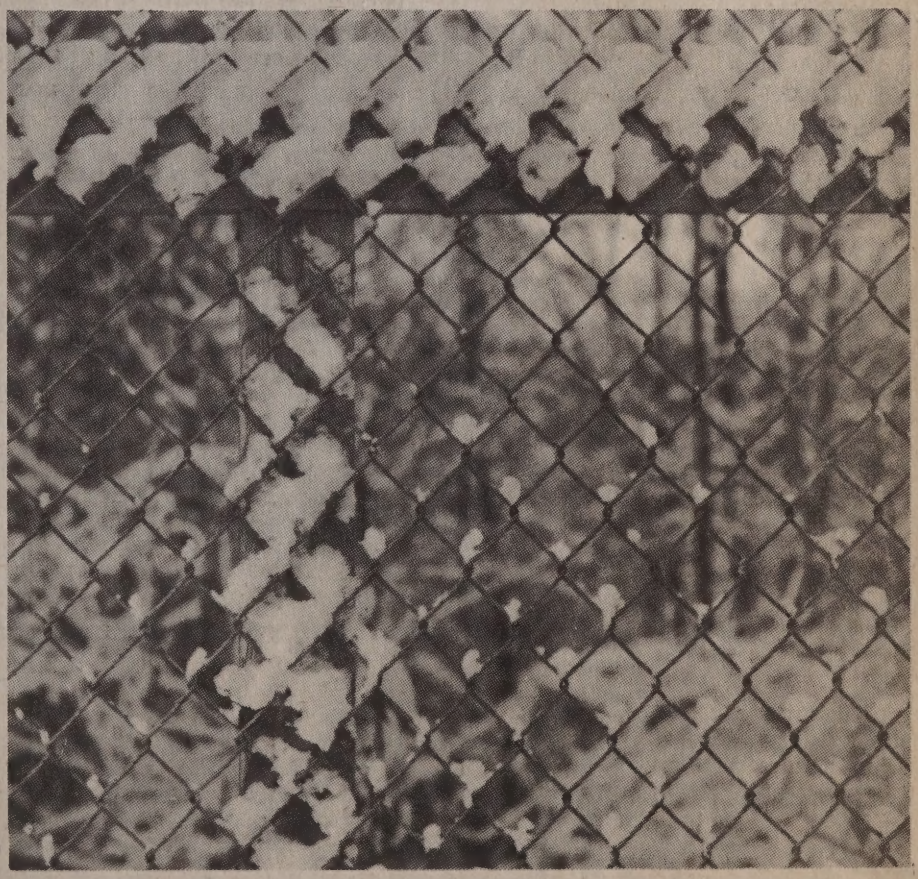

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*Contributions from local artists this month: Cora Baker, p. 12; Sudi Baker, p15; Maureen Banner, pp. 1, 3, 7, 12, 13, 16, 19, 23; Bonner McAllester, p. 14; Glynis Oliver, p. 19; Edith Wilson, pp. 17, 21.*

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